

# Garry Oak Restoration Project

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*Garry Oak Restoration Project*

## Abstract

The Garry Oak Restoration Project is an example of a municipal partnership initiative promoting protection and restoration of threatened Garry oak ecosystems. The project is based on 10 restoration demonstration sites on municipal lands, designed to educate local residents about the value and sensitivity of Garry oak ecosystems through hands-on participation in ecological restoration. In support of the Garry Oak Ecosystem Recovery Strategy, the Garry Oak Restoration Project is managed by the Municipality of Saanich in partnership with Environment Canada, the University of Victoria and the Garry Oak Meadows Preservation Society. This municipal program includes education for municipal staff and other decision-makers and works to include Garry oak ecosystems within community planning processes.

The objective of this submission is to provide a model of a municipal/community-level program enabling communication and education for decision-makers and citizens about a threatened ecosystem and the importance of protection and ecological restoration, with the ultimate goal of creating community-wide stewardship. The results of this program, started in 1999, have included the establishment of a *Restoration Management Plan* preceded by vegetation, wildlife and soil inventories; establishment of a community volunteer program including active restoration and monitoring; research partnerships; educational tools including a website and displays; and a partnership option to support other local restoration projects. The success of this program has included support and encouragement of further restoration and education programs within the municipality and as a model for other municipalities.

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There are four main goals of this program concerning:

- Restoration
- Education
- Community Building and Partnerships
- Protection and Conservation

The ultimate vision of the program is for all residents of Saanich to be Garry oak ecosystems stewards. The key to this program is education through hands-on involvement in restoration activities. The program also supports other restoration efforts in the community through the ongoing support of “partnership sites,” which currently includes sites at local public schools, a college and a burial park. As a model of a municipal program, it is also hoped that these efforts will encourage similar efforts in other jurisdictions.

Funding for this program has been provided by the Municipality of Saanich, the Georgia Basin Ecosystem Initiative, the Habitat Stewardship Program of the Government of Canada, the Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team, the Nature Conservancy of Canada and the BC Hydro/ Tree Canada Foundation.

For more information on this program, visit the GORP website at <http://www.gorpsaanich.com/> or contact the author.



**Photo 1.** Playfair Park Restoration Site.



**Photo 2.** Camas Park Restoration Site.